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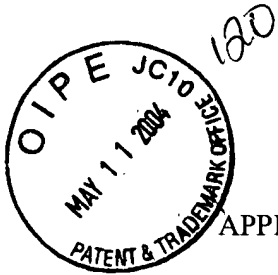
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Docket No.: RPC 0579 PUS
Serial No. 10/027,741

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3727

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: Trenton M Overholt EXAMINER: Castellano
SERIAL NO.: 10/027,741 GROUP ART UNIT: 3727
FILING DATE: December 20, 2001
FOR: COLLAPSIBLE CONTAINER WITH RECESSED SIDE-PANEL LATCH
DOCKET NO.: RPC 0579 PUS

APPEAL BRIEF

Mail Stop Appeal Briefs-Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

Appellant files this Appeal Brief pursuant to the Notice of Appeal filed March 9, 2004.

Real Party in Interest


The real party in interest is Rehrig Pacific Company, the Assignee of the entire right and interest in this application by assignment.

Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no related appeals and interferences.

CERTIFICATE OF MAIL

I hereby certify that the enclosed Appeal Brief (in triplicate) and fee are being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop Appeal Brief – Patents, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on May 7, 2004.


Konstantine J. Diamond

Status of the Claims

Per the Advisory Action mailed March 19, 2004:

Claims 1-23 and 27-33 are pending.

Claims 5, 6, 8, 10 and 14-17 are allowed.

Claims 18 and 19 are objected to as dependent upon a rejected claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 9, 12 and 22 are objected to.

Claims 1-4, 7, 11-13, 20-23 and 27-33 are rejected.

Status of Amendments

The Amendment After Final filed on December 23 2003 has not been entered. However, since the Final Rejection mailed October 24, 2003, the Examiner has withdrawn his prior art rejections of claims 8-10 and 14-17. (Advisory Action mailed March 19, 2004).

Summary of the Invention

The invention relates to a collapsible container whose side panels are interlocked and latched together at their respective edges when raised to thereby provide the assembled container with improved structural integrity.

The prior art teaches collapsible containers featuring a bottom panel and two pairs of opposed side panels. Each side panel is pivotally connected to a respective bottom panel edge to move between a collapsed position to a raised or "assembled" position in which each side panel is roughly perpendicular to the bottom panel. The side and bottom panels may include hinge components that permit the side panels to be "snapped" into place on the bottom panel, for example, by moving the basal edge of the side panel laterally (outwardly) relative to the bottom panel's peripheral edge.

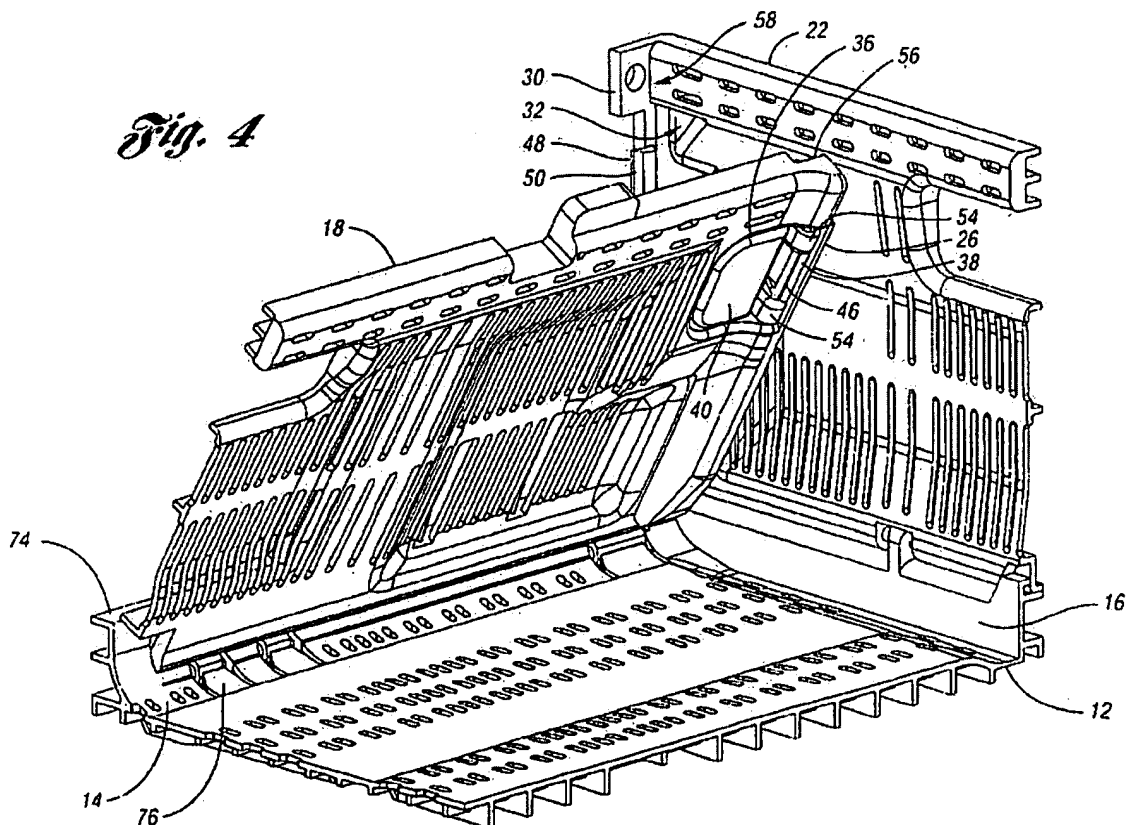
The prior art teaches the placement of latch mechanisms on the adjacent edges of the raised side panels to thereby provide the container with greater structural integrity and improved vertical stacking capability when assembled. Generally, known latch mechanisms employ a resilient, cantilevered latch member that either is flush with, or projects from the nominal lateral edge or inner face of one side panel into engagement with a complementary recess defined in the opposed edge of an adjacent side panel.

Unfortunately, because the quality of the resulting interconnection between adjacent side panels is dependent upon the nature of the engagement between the opposed abutting

shoulders of the latch member and the corresponding recess/ aperture/striker, any damage to the exposed latch member, for example, during container assembly or use, including an unintended permanent bending of the latch member relative to the nominal edge of the side panel, may impair latch functionality. Moreover, when the latch member is integrally molded with the typically polymeric side panel, such outwardly-cantilevered latch members may exhibit a reduced service life due to a bending-induced failure mode.

With respect to the present invention, Figure 4 (reproduced below) is an interior perspective view of one corner the container 10 where a side wall 18 and an end wall meet, with the side wall 18 partially folded inwardly. The end wall is also pivotally attached to the base of the container.

The lateral edge 26 of the side wall 18 includes a latch member 36 having a base portion 38 mounted on the side wall 18 proximate to its respective lateral edge 26, and a lever arm portion 40 that extends generally away from the lateral edge 26.



Referring to Figure 3 (reproduced below), the latch member 36 further includes an intermediate portion 42 disposed between the base portion 38 (Figure 4) and the lever arm portion 40. The intermediate portion 42 includes a first camming surface 44. The end wall 22 includes an inward projection 48 integrally molded with and projecting inwardly from an end wall flange 30. The inward projection 48 has a second camming surface 50 with an adjacent shoulder 52.

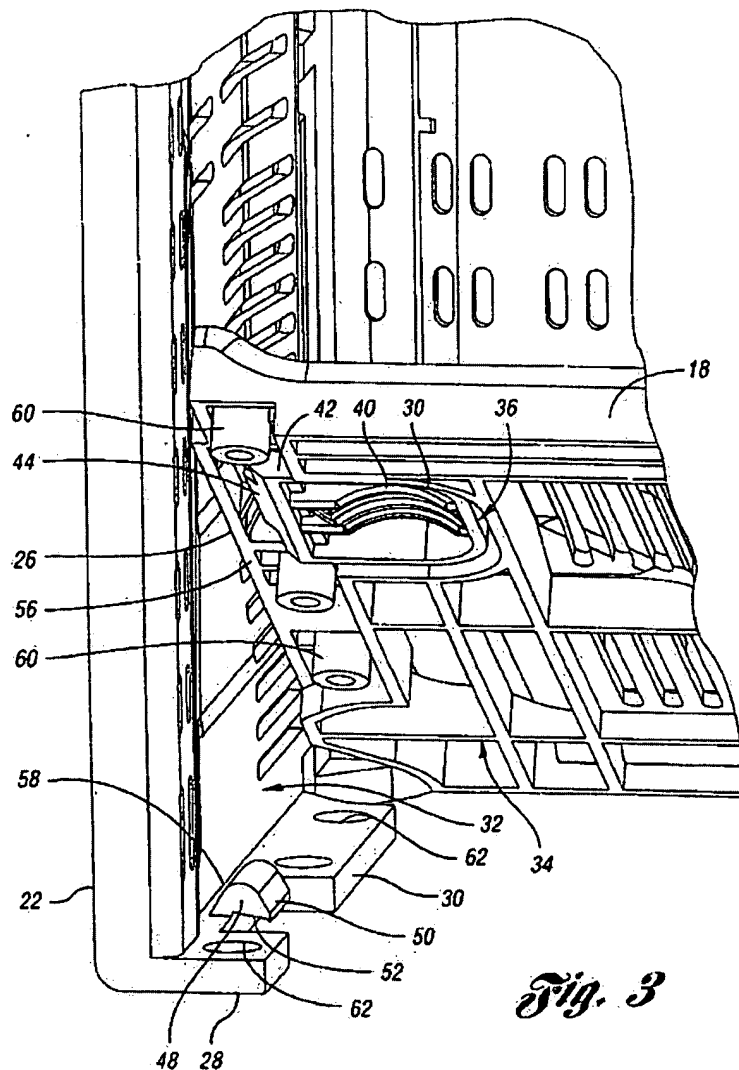
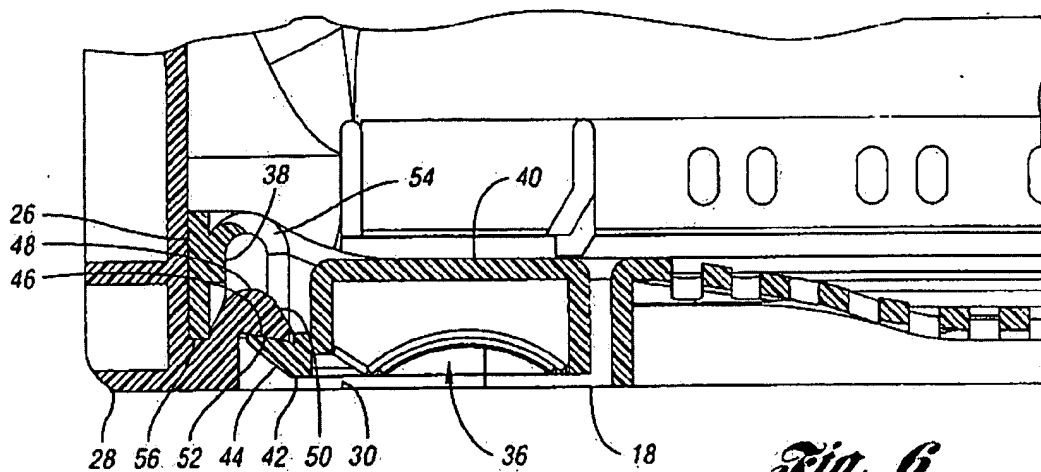
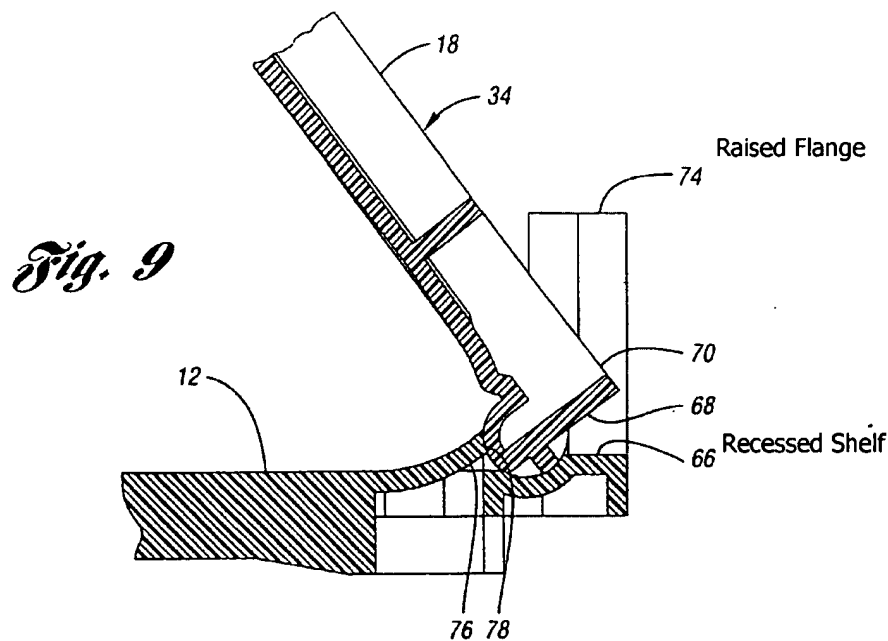


Fig. 3

Referring to Figure 6 (reproduced below), the intermediate portion 42 of the latch member 36 includes a first shoulder 46 adjacent the first camming surface 44. The camming surfaces 44, 50 and shoulders 46, 52 of the adjacent latch member 36 and inward projection 48 are generally disposed at a same height above the base 12 when the side and end walls 18, 22 are pivoted to the raised position. In this manner, when the lateral edge 26 of the side wall 18 is raised and brought into engagement with the lateral edge 28 of the end wall 22, the camming surfaces 44, 50 engage to resiliently flex the latch member 36, predominantly along its base portion 38. The shoulders 46, 52 of the latch member 36 and inward projection 48 then abuttingly engage to latch the side and end walls 18, 22 together.



In accordance with another feature of the invention, referring to Figure 9 (reproduced below) a cross-section of the hinge connection between the side wall 18 and the base 12 is shown. Recessed shelves 66 are defined about portions of the peripheral edge of the base 12, for example, proximate to each lateral edge 26 of the container's side walls 18. When the side wall 18 is pivoted to the raised position, a complementary portion 68 of the basal edge 70 of the side wall 18 pivots into engagement with the recessed shelf 66. As can be seen, the recessed shelf 66 is below the pivot axis of the side wall 18.



Issues

- I) The final rejection of claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §112 is improper.
- II) The objection/rejection of claims 9, 12 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §112 is improper.
- III) The final rejection of claims 1-3 and 28-33 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Merey is improper.
- IV) The final rejection of claims 11-13, 20-23 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Smyers et al. is improper.
- V) The final rejection of claims 11-13, 20-23 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Foy '079 is improper.

- VI) The final rejection of claims 20-23 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Luburic is improper.
- VII) The final rejection of claims 3 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Merey in view of Foy '079 is improper.
- VIII) The final rejection of claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Merey in view of EPO reference No. ('779) to Yamauchi is improper.

Grouping of Claims

The rejections of claims 1-4, 7, 11-13, 20-23 and 27-33 are contested. Claims 1-4, 7, 11-13, 20-23 and 27-33 do not stand or fall together.

For purposes of this appeal only and based upon the underlying rejections being appealed, Appellant groups the claims as follows:

I) For the rejection of claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §112, claim 7 is the only claim rejected on this ground, and does not stand or fall with any other claims.

II) For the objection/rejection of claims 9, 12 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §112, the claims stand or fall together.

III) For the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Merey, claims 1-3 and 28-33 do not stand or fall together:

Claims 1-2 and 28 stand or fall together.

Claim 3 does not stand or fall with the other claims because claim 3 recites, "the first side panel includes a rib proximate to the lateral edge thereof extending generally perpendicular to the pivot axis of the first side panel," which is not recited by the other claims and which is not found in Merey.

Claim 29 does not stand or fall with the other claims because claim 29 recites that the base portion is at least substantially between the lever arm portion and the inner face of the second side panel, which is not recited by the other claims and which is not shown in Merey.

Claim 30 does not stand or fall with the other claims because claim 30 recites an arcuate leg between the lateral edge and the intermediate portion, which is not recited by the other claims and which is not found in Merey.

Claim 31 does not stand or fall with the other claims because claim 31 recites that the intermediate portion travels substantially in a plane parallel to the outer face of the first side panel when the latch member is deflected to engage or disengage the latch member, which is not recited by the other claims and which is not found in Merey.

Claim 32 does not stand or fall with the other claims because claim 32 recites that the intermediate portion extends toward a lateral center of the first panel as it extends away from the base portion, which is not recited by the other claims and which is not found in Merey.

Claim 33 does not stand or fall with the other claims because claim 33 recites that the intermediate portion is between the base portion and a lateral center of the first panel, which is not recited by the other claims and which is not found in Merey.

IV and V) The final rejections of claims 11-13, 20-23 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Smyers or Foy '079 are improper. These rejections are independent, but for convenience are discussed together.

Claim 11-13 do not stand or fall with the other claims because they recite a recessed shelf that is below a pivot axis of the wall, which is not recited by the other claims and which is not found in Smyers or Foy '079.

Claims 20-23 and 27 do not stand or fall with claims 11-13 because they recite a stop member having a surface that engages the inwardly-facing abutting surface of the side panel when the side panel is pivoted to the raised position, where the abutting surface is proximate the basal edge of the side panel, which is not recited by the other claims and which is not found in Smyers or Foy '079.

Claim 21 does not stand or fall with claims 11-13 or claims 20, 23 and 27 because claim 21 recites that the stop member includes a cantilevered portion, with the complementary surface defined on a free end of the cantilevered portion, which is not recited by the other claims and which is not found in Smyers or Foy '079.

VI) For the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Luburic, claims 20-23 and 27 stand or fall together.

VII) For the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Merey in view of Foy '079, claims 3 and 4 stand or fall together.

VIII) For the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Merey in view of EPO reference No. ('779) to Yamauchi, claim 7 is the only claim rejected.

Argument

D) §112 Rejection of Claim 7

The Examiner has rejected claim 7 as indefinite. Claim 7 depends from claim 1. For convenience, portions of claim 1 and the entirety of claim 7 are reproduced below:

1. A collapsible container comprising:

* * *

a plurality of side panels, * * * wherein a first side panel includes an outer face and a lateral edge bordering the outer face, and a second side panel includes an inner face, a lateral edge bordering the inner face, and a flange projecting from the inner face along at least a portion of the lateral edge, * * *

7. The collapsible container of claim 1, wherein the first side panel includes at least one locating member projecting outwardly from the outer face proximate to the ***lateral edge***, and wherein the flange includes at least one socket adapted to receive the at least one locating member when the first and second side panels are respectively pivoted to the raised position.

The Examiner argues that the term “lateral edge” (bold italics above) is indefinite because “it can’t be determined which of the lateral edges is meant, the lateral edge associated with the first side panel or the lateral edge associated with the second side panel.” (Page 3, Final Rejection Mailed October 24, 2003).

The “lateral edge” to which the Examiner refers in Claim 7 is clearly referring to the “first side panel” at the beginning of that phrase. The claim states that it is the “first side panel” that includes the “at least one locating member.” Thus it is clear that the claimed “locating member” of the first side panel is proximate the “lateral edge” of the “first side panel.” Therefore, claim 7 is not indefinite.

Although the claim is clear, Appellant offered to amend claim 7 to add “of the first panel,” after “lateral edge” to remove the issue from the appeal, but the Examiner refused to enter the Amendment After Final, stating, “the issues for appeal are made further complex by the addition of ‘of the first side panel’ in claim 7, line 3 wherein it was not previously known if the lateral edge of the first side panel or the second side panel was being referred to.” Advisory Action mailed February 4, 2004.

II) Objection/§112 Rejection of Claims 9, 12 and 22

The Examiner has “objected” to claims 9, 12 and 22 saying that the drawings do not show “a raised flange that overlies the outer face of the one side panel when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position as stated in claims 9, 12 and 22.”¹ The Examiner has clarified his position that in Appellant’s application, “the flange 74 lies adjacent to and in front of the outer face of the side panel rather than above or over.”² Thus, the Examiner disagrees with the Appellant’s use of the term “overlies” to describe the Appellant’s invention.

In substance, this is not an “objection” to the drawings, but rather a rejection of the claims. Appellant cannot amend the drawings to show the flange 74 “above” the outer face of the side panel, in accordance with the Examiner’s interpretation of the claim term “overlies,” because in fact, as the Examiner correctly indicates, “the flange 74 lies adjacent to and in front of the outer face of the side panel.” The substance of the Examiner’s rejection in reality appears to be under §112 first paragraph - - that the specification does not show the Examiner’s incorrect interpretation of the “claimed invention,” i.e. with the flange “above” the outer face of the side panel.

In any event, Appellant disagrees with the Examiner’s interpretation of the claim term “overlies.” The term “overlies” is clearly defined in the specification on page 12, lines 7-10:

[O]ther portions 72 of the peripheral edge of the base 12, for example, proximate to the midpoint of each side wall 18, include a raised flange 74 that overlies the side wall’s outer face 34 when the side wall 18 is pivoted to the raised position.

The flange 74 is also shown overlying the outer face of the side panel in Figure 1. Therefore, this rejection should not be sustained.

III) §102 Rejection over Merey

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 and 28-33 as anticipated by Merey. The Examiner is calling the surface inward of the latch (near numeral 16 below) the “lateral edge” in Merey. This is incorrect. Referring to Figure 8 of Merey, the “lateral edge” of the side wall in Merey is clearly the outer tip of the catch 82. Properly interpreted, in Merey, the lever arm extends from a “base portion” that is substantially inward of the lateral edge of the

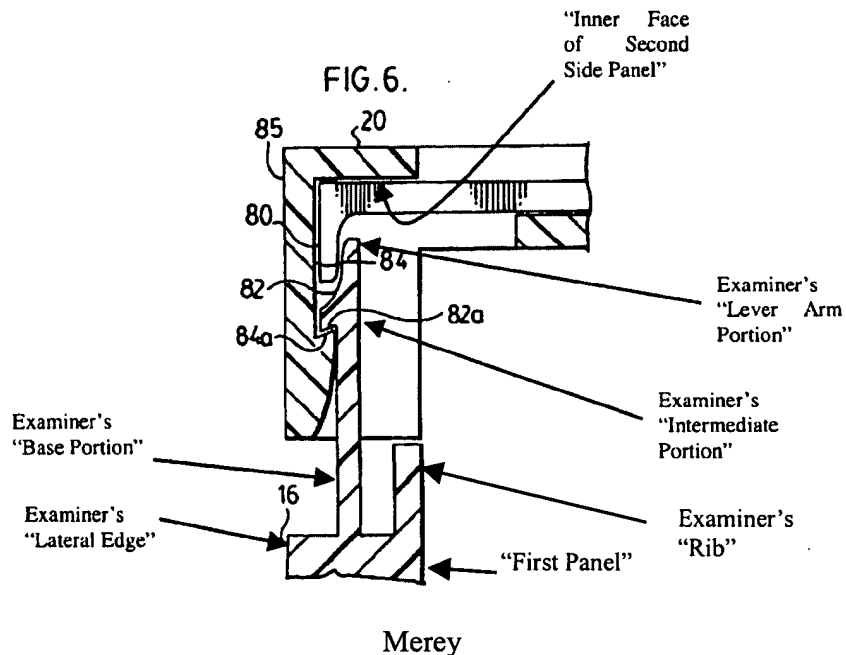
¹ Page 2 of Final Rejection mailed October 24, 2003.

²Id.

side panel. The lever arm in Merey also extends from the base portion toward the lateral edge. Therefore, claim 1 is not anticipated by Merey.

The Examiner has rejected claim 3 as anticipated by Merey even though the Examiner correctly indicates at page 4 of the Final Rejection that Merey does *not* include the rib claimed in claim 3.³ Therefore, claim 3 is not anticipated by Merey. The “rib” that the Examiner references in Figure 6 of Merey is not perpendicular to the pivot axis of the side wall.

Using the Examiner’s application of the claim language to Merey as shown below (including the Examiner’s characterization that a “lever arm” extends away from a “lateral edge” toward a “base portion”), Merey could not possibly meet the terms of claims 29-33.



Dependent claim 29 recites that the base portion is at least substantially between the lever arm portion and the inner face of the second side panel. As shown above, what the Examiner calls the “base portion” is not anywhere near the area between what the Examiner calls the “lever arm portion” and the inner face of the second side panel. Therefore, claim 29 is not anticipated by Merey.

Dependent claim 30 recites an arcuate leg between the lateral edge and the intermediate portion. As is clear from Figure 6 above, there is no arcuate leg between what the Examiner calls the “lateral edge” and what the Examiner calls the “intermediate portion.” Claim 30 is not anticipated by Merey.

³ The Examiner states, “Merey discloses the invention except for the inside corner which receives a rib.” Page 4 of Final Rejection mailed October 24, 2003.

Dependent claim 31 recites that the intermediate portion travels substantially in a plane parallel to the outer face of the first side panel when the latch member is deflected to engage or disengage the latch member. As can be seen in Figure 6 above, the intermediate portion would travel substantially perpendicularly to the outer face of the first side panel. Therefore, claim 31 is not anticipated by Merey.

Dependent claim 32 recites that the intermediate portion extends toward a lateral center of the first panel as it extends away from the base portion. As can be seen in Figure 6 above, what the Examiner calls the “intermediate portion” in Merey is outward of both the Examiner’s “base portion” and the lateral center of the first panel. Therefore, claim 32 is not anticipated by Merey.

Dependent claim 33 recites that the intermediate portion is between the base portion and a lateral center of the first panel. Clearly, in Merey what the Examiner calls the “intermediate portion” is not between the Examiner’s “base portion” and the lateral center. Claim 33 is not anticipated by Merey.

IV) and V) §102 Rejections over Smyers and Foy ‘079

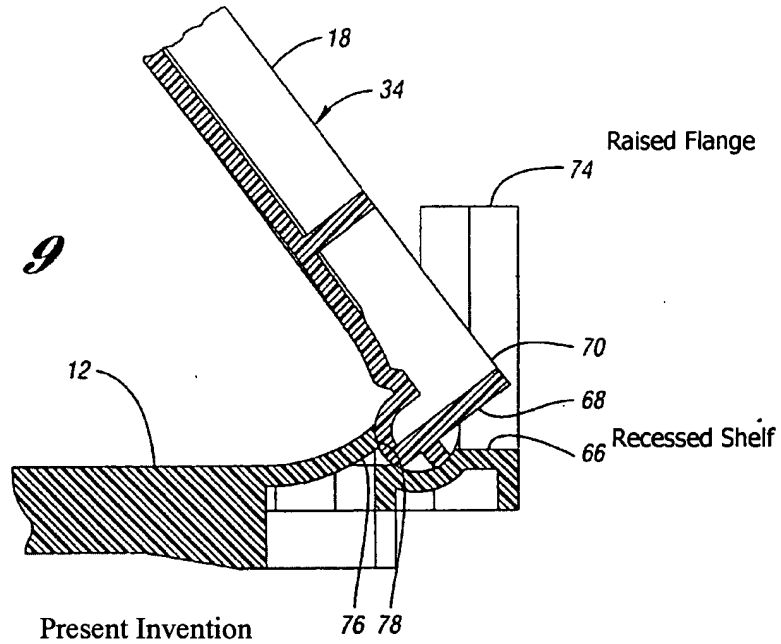
The Examiner has rejected claims 11-13, 20-23 and 27 as anticipated by Smyers (U.S. 6,460,717) or Foy (U.S. 4,923,079). Presumably, the Examiner intends these rejections to be in the alternative. For convenience, they will be described together below, however, it should be understood that these are separate, independent grounds of rejection.

First, the Examiner states that these claims are “clearly anticipated” by Foy, yet the Office Action mailed October 7, 2002 (page 2) admitted that Foy ‘079 does not disclose the claimed “abutting surface” (claims 13 and 20).

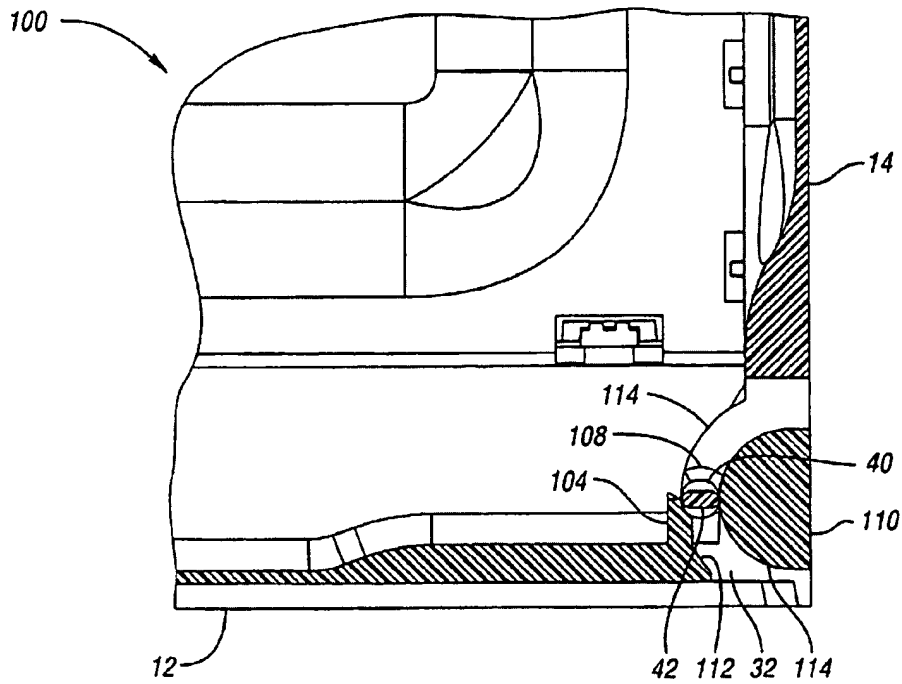
Claims 11-13

Smyers and Foy ‘079 do not disclose a recessed shelf that is below a pivot axis of the wall, as recited by claims 11-13. For comparison, Figure 9 from the present application is reproduced below. As can be seen, the recessed shelf is below the pivot axis of the side wall.

Fig. 9

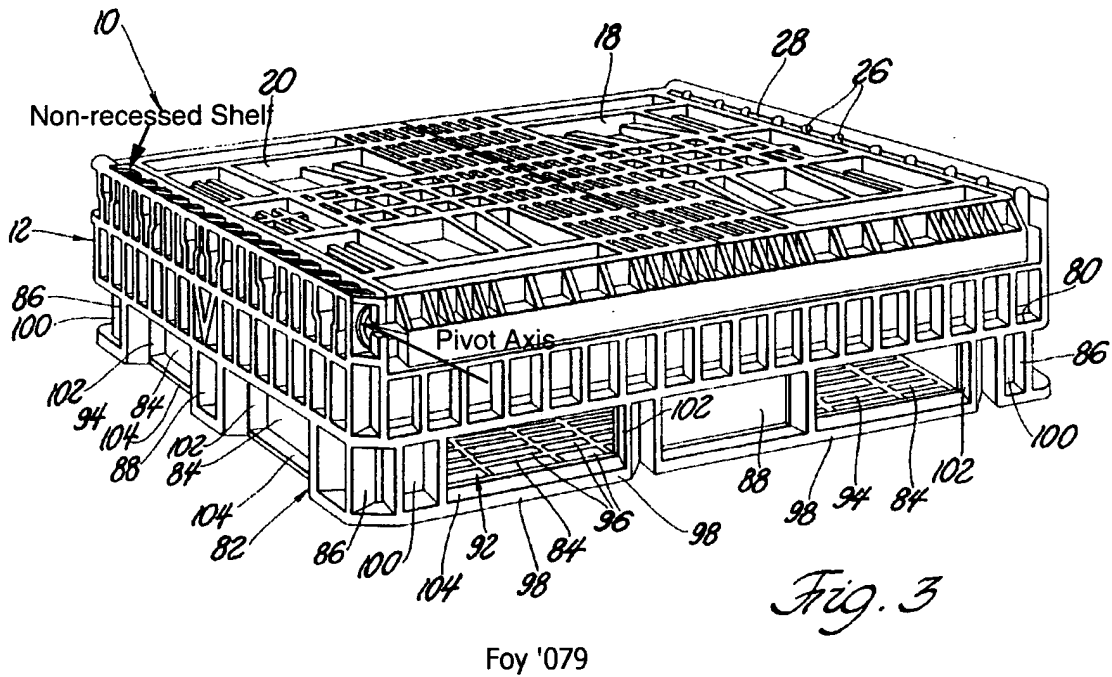
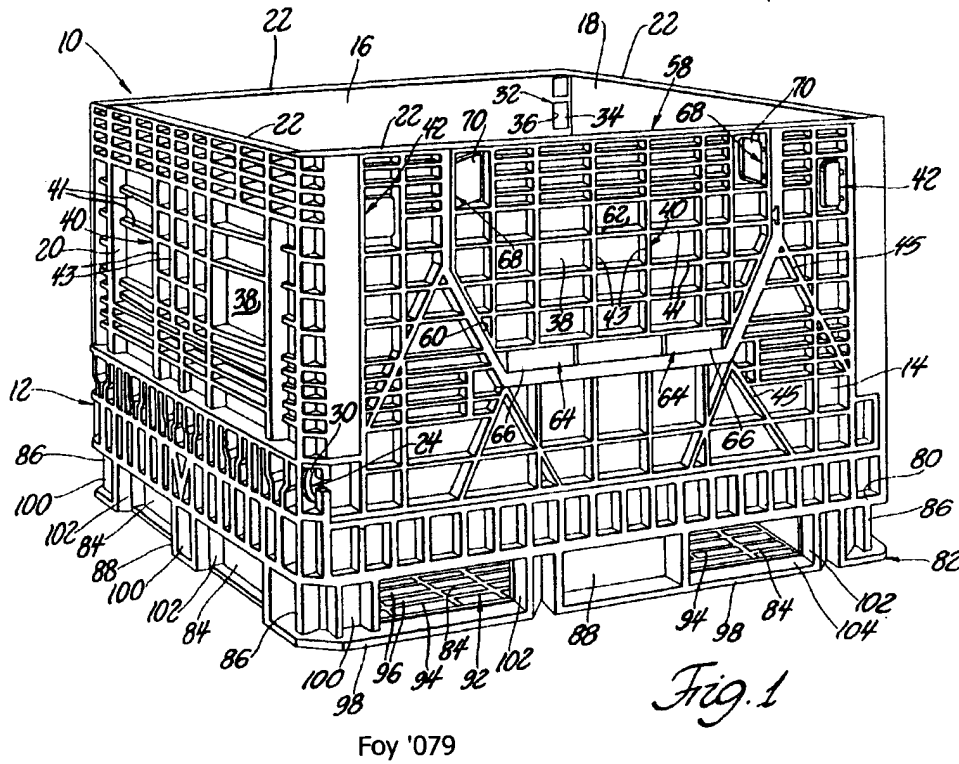


In contrast, there is no recessed shelf in Smyers, which is reproduced below.



Smyers Fig. 10

Nor is there a recessed shelf below the pivot axis in Foy '079. Figures 1 and 3 from Foy '079 are reproduced below. As shown, the shelf is not recessed and is not below the pivot axis.



Therefore, claims 11-13 are not anticipated by Smyers or Foy '079.

Claims 20-23 and 27

Claim 20 recites a stop member having a surface that engages the inwardly-facing abutting surface of the side panel when the side panel is pivoted to the raised position, where the abutting surface is proximate the basal edge of the side panel. Despite several requests for clarification, the Examiner has not indicated where he finds the stop member in the Smyers and Foy '079. The stationary member 22 in Smyers does not abut a surface proximate the basal edge of the side panel. Foy '079 does not disclose the abutting surface, as the previous rejection admitted.

Claim 21

Whatever the Examiner is calling the "stop members" in Smyers and Foy '079, they do not include "cantilevered portions" with the complementary surface defined on a free end of the cantilevered portion, as recited by claim 21. Therefore, claim 21 is independently patentable.

VI) §102 Rejection over Luburic

The Examiner has rejected claims 20-23 and 27 as anticipated by Luburic (U.S. 5,938,059). The Examiner has further specified that "the pivot pin [64 of Luburic] includes an inwardly-facing abutting surface" in his rejection of claims 20-23 and 27. However, the pivot pin 64 of Luburic does not include "an inwardly facing abutting surface of the side panel," as claimed by claim 20. Even more clearly, it is unreasonable for the Examiner to call the pivot pin 64 of Luburic part of the claimed "side panel." Therefore, Luburic does not anticipate claims 20-23 and 27.

VII) §103 Rejection of Merey in view of Foy '079

The Examiner has rejected claims 3 and 4 as obvious over Merey in view of Foy '079. Contrary to the Examiner's §102 rejection above, the Examiner admits that Merey does not disclose the rib as claimed, but states that "it would have been obvious to add the rib at a location such that the rib is received on the inside corner of an adjacent panel in order to provide a rib-corner structure which adds stability..." (Page 4 of Final Rejection Mailed October 24, 2003.) However, neither Merey nor Foy '079 suggest adding a rib-corner structure in order to add stability. Therefore, there is no motivation for making the proposed

modification to Merey and no *prima facie* case of obviousness. Additionally, referring to Figure 6 of Merey, a rib could not be added to the latch on the first side panel to be received on the inside corner of the second side panel 20 without the rib interfering with the release mechanism (flange 80). At the same time, the release mechanism (flange 80) would prevent the rib from contacting the corner, so there would be no gain in stability. Therefore, it would not be obvious to add the rib to Merey and claims 3 and 4 are not obvious.

VIII) §103 Rejection of Merey in view of Yamauchi


The Examiner has rejected claim 7 as obvious over Merey in view of Yamauchi (EP 1114779-A2). Claim 7 specifies at least one locating member projecting outwardly from the outer face of the first side panel and that the flange includes at least one socket adapted to receive at least one locating member. If such a locating member were added to what the Examiner calls the outer face of the first side panel 16 in Merey, the side panels 16-20 would not be able to be assembled or disassembled. In Merey, the first side panel 16 is first pivoted to the upright position. The second side panel 20 is then pivoted to the upright position, with the catch 82 deflecting inwardly until it passes edge 84a, where it is retained. Thus, a locating member projecting outwardly from the outer face of the first side panel 16 would not be able to be inserted into a socket on the flange of the second panel. Therefore, it would not be obvious to make this modification and claim 7 is independently patentable.

Closing

For the above reasons, the Examiner's rejections should not be sustained. Please charge Deposit Account No. 50-1984 \$330 for the Appeal Brief fee. If any additional fees are due, please charge Deposit Account No. 50-1984.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: MAY 7, 2004



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Claims Appendix

1. A collapsible container comprising:

a bottom panel defining a peripheral edge; and

a plurality of side panels, each side panel being mounted on the bottom panel along a respective portion of the peripheral edge for pivoting movement about a respective pivot axis, wherein a first side panel includes an outer face and a lateral edge bordering the outer face, and a second side panel includes an inner face, a lateral edge bordering the inner face, and a flange projecting from the inner face along at least a portion of the lateral edge, the first and second side panels respectively pivoting to a raised position relative to the bottom panel such that the flange overlies the outer face as the lateral edge of the first side panel engages the lateral edge of the second side panel,

wherein the first side panel includes a latch member having a base portion mounted on the first side panel proximate to the lateral edge thereof, a lever arm portion extending generally away from the lateral edge, and a first intermediate portion disposed between the base portion and the lever arm portion, the first intermediate portion including a first camming surface and a first shoulder adjacent to the first camming surface, and

wherein the second side panel includes an inward projection having a second camming surface and a second shoulder adjacent to the second camming surface, the camming surfaces and shoulders being generally disposed at a same height above the bottom panel when the first and second side panels are respectively pivoted to the raised position.

2. The collapsible container of claim 1, wherein the inward projection projects from the flange.

3. The collapsible container of claim 1, wherein the first side panel includes a rib proximate to the lateral edge thereof extending generally perpendicular to the pivot axis of the first side panel, and wherein the base portion of the latch member is integrally formed with the rib.

4. The collapsible container of claim 3, wherein the second side panel includes an interior corner defined by an intersection of the inner face and the flange, and wherein the rib defines a substantially-continuous first length of a first portion of the outer face of the first side panel, the first length of the first portion of the outer face being received in the interior corner of the second side panel when the first and second side panels are respectively pivoted to the raised position.

5. A collapsible container comprising:

a bottom panel defining a peripheral edge; and

a plurality of side panels, each side panel being mounted on the bottom panel along a respective portion of the peripheral edge for pivoting movement about a respective pivot axis, wherein a first side panel includes an outer face and a lateral edge bordering the outer face, and a second side panel includes an inner face, a lateral edge bordering the inner face, and a flange projecting from the inner face along at least a portion of the lateral edge, the first and second side panels respectively pivoting to a raised position relative to the bottom panel such that the flange overlies the outer face as the lateral edge of the first side panel engages the lateral edge of the second side panel,

wherein the first side panel includes a latch member having a base portion mounted on the first side panel proximate to the lateral edge thereof, a lever arm portion extending generally away from the lateral edge, and a first intermediate portion disposed between the base portion and the lever arm portion, the first intermediate portion including a first camming surface and a first shoulder adjacent to the first camming surface, wherein the base portion of the latch member includes a pair of spaced legs joined to the intermediate portion on either side of the camming surface,

wherein the second side panel includes an inward projection having a second camming surface and a second shoulder adjacent to the second camming surface, the camming surfaces and shoulders being generally disposed at a same height above the bottom panel when the first and second side panels are respectively pivoted to the raised position.

6. The collapsible container of claim 5, wherein the legs of the base portion extend to respective positions outboard of the intermediate portion of the latch member such that deflection of the latch member relative to the outer face of the first side panel generates both flexural and torsional bending of each leg.

7. The collapsible container of claim 1, wherein the first side panel includes at least one locating member projecting outwardly from the outer face proximate to the lateral edge, and wherein the flange includes at least one socket adapted to receive the at least one locating member when the first and second side panels are respectively pivoted to the raised position.

8. The collapsible container of claim 1, wherein a first portion of the peripheral edge of the bottom panel includes a recessed shelf, and wherein a basal edge of one side panel pivots into engagement with the recessed shelf when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

9. The collapsible container of claim 8, wherein a second portion of the peripheral edge of the bottom panel proximate the first portion includes a raised flange that overlies the outer face of the one side panel when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

10. The collapsible container of claim 8, wherein the bottom panel includes at least one integrally-molded, cantilevered stop member having a free end surface extending in the direction of the first portion of the peripheral edge that engages the basal edge of the one side panel when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

11. A collapsible container comprising:
a bottom panel having a peripheral edge, and
a plurality of side panels, each side panel being mounted on the bottom panel along a respective portion of the peripheral edge for pivoting movement about a respective pivot axis between a collapsed position and a raised position, each side panel including a pair of diametrical lateral edges, each side panel pivoting to a raised position relative to the bottom panel such that each lateral edge of a given side panel interlockingly engages a lateral edge of an adjacent side panel,

wherein one side panel includes an outer face and a basal edge bordering the outer face, wherein a first portion of the peripheral edge of the bottom panel includes a recessed shelf, wherein the recessed shelf is located below the pivot axis of the one side panel, and

wherein a basal edge of the one side panel pivots into engagement with the recessed shelf when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

12. The collapsible container of claim 11, wherein a second portion of the peripheral edge of the bottom panel proximate the first portion includes a raised flange that overlies the outer face of the one side panel when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

13. The collapsible container of claim 11, wherein the one side panel includes an inwardly-facing abutting surface proximate to the basal edge, and wherein the bottom panel includes at least one integrally-molded, cantilevered stop member having a free end surface extending in the direction of the first portion of the peripheral edge that engages the inwardly-facing abutting surface of the one side panel when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

14. The collapsible container of claim 11, wherein a first side panel includes an outer face,

wherein a second side panel adjacent to the first side panel includes an inner face and a flange projecting from the inner face along at least a portion of one lateral edge thereof, the first and second side panels respectively pivoting to the raised position such that the flange overlies the outer face as the one lateral edge of the first side panel engages one lateral edge of the second side panel, and

wherein the first side panel includes at least one locating member projecting outwardly from the outer face proximate to the one lateral edge, and wherein the flange includes at least one socket adapted to receive the at least one locating member when the first and second side panels are respectively pivoted to the raised position to maintain the engagement of the basal edge of the one side panel with the recessed shelf when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

15. The collapsible container of claim 14, wherein the first side panel includes a latch member having a base portion mounted on the first side panel proximate to the one lateral edge thereof, a lever arm portion extending generally away from the lateral edge, and a first intermediate portion disposed between the base portion and the lever arm portion, the first intermediate portion including a first camming surface and a first shoulder adjacent to the first camming surface, and

wherein the second side panel includes an inward projection having a second camming surface and a second shoulder adjacent to the second camming surface, the camming surfaces and shoulders being generally disposed at a same height above the bottom panel when the first and second side panels are respectively pivoted to the raised position.

16. The collapsible container of claim 15, wherein the inward projection projects from the flange.

17. The collapsible container of claim 15, wherein the first side panel includes a rib proximate to the lateral edge thereof extending generally perpendicular to the pivot axis of the first side panel, and wherein the base portion of the latch member is integrally formed with the rib.

18. The collapsible container of claim 15, wherein the base portion of the latch member includes a pair of spaced legs joined to the intermediate portion on either side of the camming surface.

19. The collapsible container of claim 18, wherein the legs of the base portion extend to respective positions outboard of the intermediate portion of the latch member such that deflection of the latch member relative to the outer face of the first side panel generates both flexural and torsional bending of each leg.

20. A collapsible container comprising:
a bottom panel having a peripheral edge; and
a plurality of side panels, each side panel being mounted on the bottom panel along a respective first portion of the peripheral edge for pivoting movement about a respective pivot axis between a collapsed position and a raised position;

wherein one side panel includes a basal edge, and an inwardly-facing abutting surface proximate to the basal edge; and

wherein the bottom panel includes at least one integrally-molded stop member having a complementary surface that engages the inwardly-facing abutting surface of the one side panel when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

21. The collapsible container of claim 20, wherein the stop member includes a cantilevered portion extending in the direction of the first portion of the peripheral edge proximate to the basal edge of the side panel, and wherein the complementary surface of the stop member is defined on a free end of the cantilevered portion.

22. The collapsible container of claim 20, wherein a second portion of the peripheral edge of the bottom panel proximate the first portion includes a raised flange that overlies the outer face of the one side panel when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

23. The collapsible container of claim 20, wherein a third portion of the peripheral edge of the bottom panel includes a recessed shelf, and wherein the basal edge of the one side panel pivots into engagement with the recessed shelf when the one side panel is pivoted to the raised position.

27. The collapsible container of claim 22, wherein the one side panel includes a lateral edge and an outer face bordering the lateral edge, and wherein another side panel includes a lateral edge having a flange that overlies the outer face of the one side panel when the panels are in the raised position, whereby the flange of the other side panel prevents further relative outward movement of the lateral edge of the one side panel.

28. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the lever arm portion of the latch member is selectively deflectable transversely to the first side panel in order to selectively release the latch member from the second side panel.

29. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the base portion of the latch member is at least substantially between the lever arm portion and the inner face of the second side panel when the first and second side panels are in the raised position.

30. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the base portion includes at least one arcuate leg between the lateral edge and the intermediate portion.

31. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the intermediate portion travels substantially in a plane parallel to the outer face of the first side panel when the latch member is deflected to engage or disengage the latch member.

32. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the intermediate portion extends toward a lateral center of the first panel as it extends away from the base portion.

33. The collapsible container of claim 1 wherein the intermediate portion is between the base portion and a lateral center of the first panel.